

THE  
Clergyman's Office,  
AND THE  
Clergyman's Due.

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A  
SERMON  
Preach'd at the *Triennial Visitation* of the Right Reverend  
Father in GOD  
EDWARD  
Lord Bishop of GLOUCESTER,  
AT  
CAMPDEN, Octob. 7. 1698.

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By ROBERT MORSE, A. M. Rector of *Willersy*, in  
the County of Gloucester, and Master of the *Free-School* in *Campden*.

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*Fortis est falsam infamiam contemnere. Sunt qui quod sentiunt, etiamsi  
optimum sit, amen invidia metu non audent dicere.* Tul. Of. l. i. p. 37.

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To the Right Reverend Father in  
God *Edward*, by Divine Providence,  
Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*.

My Lord,

**H**AVING receiv'd your Lordship's Letter to Preach  
the Visitation-Sermon at Campden, I was not  
long in resolving what Points of Doctrine to in-  
sist upon.

The Duty of Prayer took up my Thoughts in the first place ;  
one of the principal Duties of sinful Men, though now accounted  
(if we may guess by their general Practise) the least of Chri-  
stian Obligations. I am much afraid, that they who are negli-  
gent in coming to the Publick Divine Service, are not more  
forward in the performance of this indispensable part of Reli-  
gion elsewhere.

Though Common Prayer is now become a scandalous thing  
in the Opinion of some (we unto them by whom the offence  
cometh) yet I am persuaded the more frequent use good and  
wise Men make of it, the higher esteem they must have for it.

Discouraging once about the Excellency of our Service-Book,  
(as some Men call it by way of contempt, as if Book-Prayer  
was altogether Antichristian) with a Minister of the Presbyte-  
rian Communion, upon his Accusations of it in General, I de-  
sir'd him to instance in some Particular. After some pause, he  
at last pitch'd upon these Words ; Give Peace in our Time,  
O Lord, because there is none other, &c. God be praised,  
by the Courage and Conduct of His Present Majesty, King  
William, we have the Blessing pray'd for : but, as the Lear-

*ned Bishop Stillingfleet says to Mr. Baxter, in his excellent Book of the Unreasonableness of Separation, on a like occasion; at this rate some Men may want Causes to defend, but they can never want Arguments.*

*That I take occasion in the second place to Discourse upon the Duty of Thanksgiving, Gratitude at this time more particularly obliges me, and all of us of the Reform'd Persuasion. For I take it to be past all doubt, that we of the Church of England, and Protestant Religion, were not long since in imminent danger of losing the publick Exercise of it.*

*In my third and fourth Particulars I aim at the Honour due to the Clergy, upon the account of their Office; and shew that they ought to preserve themselves from Contempt, by a Demeanour suitable to their Sacred Office. That this of ours is a despicable Deanery of Clergy-Men, we dare challenge our greatest Adversaries to prove. Bishop Nicholson us'd to call it his Beloved Deanery; and I hope we shall all deport our selves so as to find the like Approbation in your Lordship, our Diocesan.*

*That Sober, Religious and Learned Ministers should be any where despis'd, must proceed from a gross and barbarous rudeness of Men, mixt with an Atheistical Genius: Wherever Men have been truly well Bred, sincerely Virtuous and Pious, they have paid their due respects to God's Ministers.*

*That your Lordship may long enjoy that Happiness, wherever you are concern'd, as you justly merit it by your Love to the Church of England, which among sundry other Instances you have signally demonstrated, in your late Encouragement of the Minister of Cirencester, is the very hearty wish of*

My Lord,  
Your Lordships most Dutiful  
And Humble Servant,

ROBERT MORSE.



I Thessal. Chap. V. 17, 18, 19 and 20 Verses.

*Pray without ceasing: In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit: Despise not Prophecies.*

**T**HE Occasion of St. Paul's Writing this Excellent Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, was the ill usage those among them who had embraced the Christian Faith received, together with their Apostle, who had Preach'd it into their Ears, and by those Instruments of Conveyance (God Blessing the Seed sown) by the best of Demonstrations, and most Infallible Arguments, rooted it in their Hearts. The hard Treatment they underwent, was from the Unbelieving Jews, or their Adherents, who liv'd in *Thessalonica*, or were Inhabitants of some part or other of *Macedonia*. They were none of them at that distance, but their Malice and Revenge would bring them quickly together to Consult, and effect, if possible, the Extirpation of the *Christian Religion*.

The Good Apostle had dealt very fairly with these Believing *Thessalonians*, and the other *Macedonian Christians*; he had told them plainly what they must trust to, if they were *Christians* in reality. 'Twas not a Life of Ease or Luxury they were to lead, but such as his own; a Life of Labour and hard Travel, yet withal alleviated by a chearful Spirit, and a thankful Commemoration of the Disciple being like unto his Master, and the Servant as his Lord, *Mat. 10. 25*. With an Assurance, That Sufferings for Christs sake would not last for ever but the recompence

pence of the reward would, which God the Father, through the Merits of his Son Christ Jesus, would bestow upon them.

The Persecutors of the Church, St. Paul knew, would flourish like a Green Bay Tree for a while, but their end, he foresaw, without timely Repentance (which he most earnestly desired) would be Infernal Flames; and that it would not be long e'er the Christians, as 'twas reveal'd to him from Heaven, should have a glorious Deliverance; and after the Storms and Tempests of Persecution, quiet *Halcyon Days*; as they had.

The danger was, least in the interim, upon a timorous prospect of the Trouble that should intervene, they should be drawn away from the Profession of the Faith, *turning aside like a deceitful bow*, Psal. 78. 57.

As to this Affair, St. Paul was very solicitous, lest his labour in the Gospel should prove in vain upon their accounts, tho not his own; as appears from the Third Chap. of this Epistle, ver. 5. Wherefore he saw it necessary frequently to put in mind what they were, and what to do. To this end may be read what is antecedent and consequent in this Epistle to the Chapter where my Text is.

*Pray without ceasing.*

*In every thing give thanks, &c.*

*Quench not the Spirit.*

*Despise not Prophecies.*

Which Words are several short and pithy Sentences of Exhortation to Believers, how to behave themselves in this World, in order to their being happy in another, not limited wholly to the *Thessalonians* particular circumstances, but very extensive, and reaching all Christians, of all times and places whatsoever.

In the Words we have these Particulars;

*First.*

*First*, We are positively enjoyn'd the great Duty of Prayer, and the Constancy of it, *Pray without ceasing*.

*Secondly*, The Duty of Thanksgiving in the like positive manner, and how universally to be perform'd, and for what reason; *In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

*Thirdly*, We have a Negative Precept not to *quench the Spirit*; which includes this Affirmative in it, *viz.* that we reverence the real gifts of good Ministers, Sound and Orthodox Divines.

*Fourthly and lastly*, We are obliged not to *despise Prophecies*, which is a negative precept also, and contains this affirmative, that we set an especial value on Genuine Interpretations of the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, meant here by Prophecies; and consequently on those that make them.

1. We are here positively enjoyn'd the great Duty of Prayer, and the constancy thereof, *Pray without ceasing*.

We have many Enemies to contend with in this Vale of Misery, and Temptations to Sin; and those very potent, subtle, and ensnaring. Such is, *First*, the Prince of Darkness, the Devil, with other his accursed Accomplices, and Eternally condemned Retinue; partly by that Sublime Angelical Nature they are of, and partly by that shrewd Experience they have gain'd by the indefatigable diligence they have us'd for some Thousands of Years together, Egged on and Exasperated by an inveterate hatred to Mankind in general. For these being desperate Apostates themselves, and seeing a second Creation ordain'd, as it were, in direct opposition to them, to supply the places in Heaven by these Rebels Eternally lost, a keen and endless Malice inflames them to do all they can, to bring us also into the place of Torments; where they will not pity us; no, that will be as far from them as Heaven is from hell, but

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cruelly

cruelly Tyrannise and Insult over us when they have done : And also much Animated they have been to persist in these their Diabolical Attempts, by that victory obtained over Primitive Innocence, whereby their Stratagems have gone on with a more fatal success over the infirm Posterity of our Lapsed first Parents.

2. Besides these fierce and implacable Foes, which will always be endeavouring to draw us into Sin, and ruine all our hopes of Eternal Salvation, the World is another Enemy that hath a thousand Gins to intangle us in ; such as, Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, Profaneness, Irreligion, Voluptuousness, Intemperance, and the like, which if compli'd with, will draw Men into Destruction and Perdition.

3. Our own corrupt Flesh is apt to concur with these, to hinder us from doing good, and incline us to evil ; Hence arise inordinate Affections, and evil Concupiscencies of the Mind. So that we must needs miscarry if we rely on our own Strength, and seek not out for some Assistance more powerful than our selves ; and how is this to be sought, but from our gracious Father in Heaven, who has promis'd *to be found of them that seek Him*, if they seek him with all their Heart, and with all their Soul. This must be done by Prayer at the Throne of Grace ; and to this end the Apostle tells us, *that we must pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all perseverance*, Eph. 6. 18. This he had from our Saviour, who commands us *to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation* ; Mat. 26. 41. and *always to pray and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1. *We must pray every where*, saith St. Paul, *lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*, 1 Tim. 2. 8.

By this Prayer to God's Majesty, as we are taught to use it, we distinguish our selves from Atheists and Heathens ;

thens; 'Tis true the Heathens themselves, by the Dictates of natural Reason and Religion, held themselves obliged to one sort of Adoration or another; but here was the mischief, their Gods were no Gods; they Worshipped the Fond Imaginations of their own Hearts, and many times the work of their own Hands. They carved themselves Gods out of some senseless Stone, or hewed them out of some inanimate Tree; of part whereof they made them a Fire to warm their Hands at; of the other part they fashioned them Gods to invoke and hold up their Hands unto. To this *Horace* alludes, *Serm. Lib. 1. Sat. 8.*

*Mensis ludicras  
omnia.  
Pisces ludibria  
trunci.  
Aurebur in va-  
rias aut saxa inci-  
sa figuras.*

*Olim Truncus eram ficulus, inutile lignum,  
Cum faber incertis scammum faceret ne Priapum  
Maluit esse Deum.*

But our Addressees are to the right Object, and Owner, God alone; A God that can hear our Prayers, and not only can but will; a God that takes pleasure in our Applications to him, and hath commanded us not to neglect it to our own hurt. We continually stand in need of God's Forgiveness and Pardon; when we have Sinned (as, alas! who is there that Sins not?) we must pray for the averting God's Wrath and Indignation; we cannot be penitent if we pray not; if we confess not our Sins, we must not expect an Absolution of them.

Neither is the whole Duty of Prayer consisting of Confession alone, to expiate for the past Offences of our Lives; but tis also necessary to be used as a Method of Prevention for the time to come. This is the Antidote to keep off the infection of all Spiritual Maladies, the omission whereof is like going out fasting in a time of Epidemical



mical Pestilence, whereby a free Passage lies open for the Contagious Air to insinuate it self, and corrupt the whole Mass of Blood. The holy Father, and great Penitent, St. *Austin*, confessed it as a just Judgment of God once upon him, in giving him over to the mischief of a prevailing temptation, for having gone out that day without making his Prayer to God, as he ought to have done, and as he used to do. It always behoves us therefore, e're we enter on our several Employments, to beseech the favourable Influences and Assistances of Heaven; else what good Success can we look for, when we are out of God's Protection? But with his help what shall be able to annoy us; what may we not obtain at his hands by Prayer that is really for our Good?

It is a thing that is almost Omnipotent, like the God that hears it, and whom it is made unto. Nay it binds the Hands of the Almighty himself; *the effectual fervent Prayer of the righteous availeth so much*. Thus, for instance, when the *Israelites* in the absence of *Moses*, had made them a Golden Calf, and God was angry thereat, he doth as it were ask leave of *Moses*, as if he could do nothing without his consent; *Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may consume them, it is a stiff-necked People*: yet when *Moses* meekly besought the Lord, he repented of the evil that he thought to do unto his People and he did it not, in the *Psalmist* words; *God said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them*. Thus *Nineveh* was threatned, *Yet forty Days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown*. This determination seems absolute and irreversibile, yet it was not so; for when the *Ninevites* fasted, and prayed, and repented, upon the preaching of *Jonas*, this made God himself repent, *Jonah*, 3. 10. O the wonderful Efficacy of Devout Praying! So the Zealous



lous Breath of *Hezekiah's* mouth scatter'd, like Chaff before the Wind, the Numerous Host of a Blasphemous *Sennacherib*, 2 *Kings*, chap. 19. ver. 15. &c. and blew them into ruine and destruction. Thus his earnest Entreaties and Tears disanull'd the sad message, *Set thy house in order, for thou shalt surely dye and not live*; for we read that God heard him, and added to his Days 15 Years, *Isa.* 38. 5. So True and Infallible is the Word of him that saith, *Whatever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*, Mat. 21. 22.

We read in *Eusebius* of St. *James* the Just, how that his custom was, to enter Daily into the Temple by himself, and there with bended Knees, to entreat for Grace and Remission of Sins unto his People, *ὡς ἀποκληκόναι τὸ γένος αὐτῷ διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ κνῆσθαι ἐπὶ γόνυ περὶ πάντων τῶν διὰ τὸ αἰτηθῆναι ἄρσεν τῷ λαῷ*. *Euseb. Lib.* 2. c. 23. Infomuch that his Knees were hardned like a Camels, into a callous substance, by his constant using to Pray Kneeling. Which I mention not only as an Example of constant Prayer, but also as to the Posture of it, *Kneeling*, miserably neglected by the Majority, even of our own Communion.

Thus much for the Usefulness and Necessity of Prayer, which is of Three Kinds.

1. Private, in our Closets.
2. Domestick, with our Families.
3. Common, with the Church.

1. As for Private Prayer, it cannot be imagined, that any good Christian can live a Day, nor scarce an Hour without it; so many are his Necessities, so great his Infirmities, and so violent his Temptations: And it is not to be expressed what good a short Ejaculation will produce

duce to a Pious Christian, when for want of Time, he can use no longer Address: what Comfort it brings to an humble Penitent, though he say no more but with the Poor *Publican* in the Gospel, smiting his Breast, *God be Merciful to me a Sinner*. Morning and Evening we should implore God's Pardon for our Iniquities, his Grace to Support us, and Enable us to serve Him; but as for Ejaculations, they should be as frequent, I had almost said, as our Pulse beats, as the Minutes of our dying Breath.

2. Family-Devotions should not, unless upon very extraordinary Occasions, be pass'd by Morning and Evening; that so we may make a neat Epitome of the Church of GOD, in our several Habitations. Then,

3. As for Common-Prayers, or the Prayers of the Church, they are the best of all, especially as we have them; and we should be present at them, without ceasing, as my Text says, *ἀδιαλείπτως*, without leaving off; not forsaking the Assembling of our selves together for this purpose. They are the Publick Prayers of the Church, as Expositors tells us, that St. Paul chiefly means in this place, *ἐν κυρίῳ καὶ ὑμῖν*. The Words are (St. Luke, Chap. 21. and Ver. 26.) *Always*, that is upon all Opportunities, especially upon the *Lord's Day*, and other Feasts and Fasts of the Church.

And however it may be allowed us at home, to use a greater and more unconfin'd Freedom of Expression, by our selves, or with our Families in some particular cases; (though there I think Forms, generally speaking, most proper to be observ'd) yet for the Church of God, I esteem Forms of Prayer, and an Established Liturgy, so far

far from Stinting of the Spirit (as some Men would have it, who know not what they mean, or else would not have other poor ignorant Wretches understand) that nothing but wild Disorder and Confusion would arise amongst us, if every one (who only fancies himself sufficient for the Work) was to be his own, and the Congregations Prayer-Maker, upon every Return of Divine Worship, who knows not how to Pray with the Spirit, and to Pray with the Understanding also, 1 Cor. chap. 14. ver. 15.

And this may suffice for the Duty of Prayer. Only let me add this, with all humble Submission to you (my Reverend and Learned Brethren of the Clergy) to beseech you still to use the Prayers of the Church, with such Decency and Devotion, as may shew you to have truly Pious, and well-affected Souls; and that you Love and Admire the Unparallel'd Prayers of the Church, beyond any other Compositions whatsoever: And as for the Crude, Extempore Effusions of Enthusiasts, that you esteem them to admit of no Comparifon (but what is odious) with them.

*Secondly*, I pass on now to the Duty of Thanksgiving, and the Universality thereof, and for what reason; of which more briefly.

The Apostle tells us, *We must in every thing give thanks, because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.* Which is as much as to say, That we must look unto God, as the great Disposer of all the things of this World, and that what He allots, is best for us, in General and in Particular. If He ordains us Adversities, Troubles and Sick-

Sicknesses, Patience and Submission will carry us through them, when Murmuring and Discontent will not ease our Load here, but aggravate that and our Guilt together; and Repining and Reluctance under our present Infelicities, will but consign us to a more irreverfible State of Difatisfaction hereafter. The Apostle tells his *Thessalonians*, That this is the will of God, that they fhould in every thing give Thanks, even in Tribulations and Afflictions for the fake of Chrift Jefus, whofe Difciples they were. *Rejoice evermore*, fays he, *ver. 16.* of this Chapter.

Now this is the Life of our Religion in all Occurrences, to be of a Thankful Temper to our good God, and to Adore him for his unfpeakable Gifts, the Gifts of Food and Rayment, Health, Relations, Friends and Benefactors; all the Neceffaries and Conveniencies of this Life; but above all for the means of Grace and hopes of Glory; for the Purity of the Reformed Religion, and the Benefits of the Gofpel Light, which we enjoy in this our *Gofpen*. That we are not overwhelmed by the Darknefs of *Papifh Superftition*, by thofe fundry and late Attempts that have been made to bereave us of this Happinefs; that we are not deprived of the Ineftimable Priviledge of ferving God in fuch confecrated Places as this, after the beft and moft Primitive Modes of Worfhip; that the unjuftifiable Paradoxes either of *Rome* or *Geneya* are not Tranfplanted hither: We ought to render thanks, both Minifters and People, not only with our Lips, but in our Lives. And that will induce God, when he fees us thus grateful to him, to continue us in the ftate we are now, Objects of his Divine Favour, in the prefervation of our Church, as it is now amongft us Eftablifhed, bleffed be his wonderful and moft Glorious Goodnefs for it.

All

All you of our Communion, ought in particular to consider your Felicity in being within the Pale of the Church, and that you have not blind Guides to lead you astray, you know not whither, till you fall into the Bottomless Pit; that you have such for your Pastors, as are able to confute all Gainsayers, able and willing to instruct you in all the necessary Points of Salvation, rightly dividing the word of God, and not rending it asunder, as the manner of some is; such as Pray for you without ceasing, at home and in the Church; such as instruct your Children in the Fundamentals of Christianity; the Excellent Church Catechism; and your selves, as well as them, in the Exposition of it; such as visit you in all your Distresses, and Trials, counsel, comfort, succour you; For these Blessings we ought all to give Thanks, and for the enjoyments of the Gospel without the cruelties of an Inquisition, or the barbarities of an Oliverian sequestration. For if the *Thessalonians* were in every thing to give thanks, and rejoyce in the Lord always, tho' surrounded with Persecutions, much more we who have no disturbance in our Religion, as the poor Afflicted Protestants now in *France* and *Savoy*, and other places have, whom God of his All-sufficient Grace support, God of his Infinite Goodness in his due time deliver.

3. I proceed now, after these two foregoing positive precepts, to one that is negative, which is this, *Quench not the Spirit*, including, as I intimated, this affirmative, *viz.* That we reverence the real Gifts of Good and Faithful Ministers, Sound and Orthodox Divines. The Spirit of God does not now adays Operate in an extraordinary manner, as in the Primitive Times, so as to enable Men, otherwise Illiterate, as most of the Apostles were, to speak divers Languages, nor taught them the common way.

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The Apostles were ~~inspired~~, Inspired by the Holy Ghost, and in a more peculiar manner ~~inspired~~, Taught Immediately by God. The holy Ghost descended visibly, in Cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, as appears from *Acts*, Second and Third, from whence this passage of *not Quenching the Spirit*, seems to be deriv'd. And to Give them their due, tho' many Enthusiasts boast of Inspiration, Extraordinary Call, and Apostolical Endowments, to qualify them for the Work of the Ministry, they pretend not to the Gift of Tongues; here they will grant that the Spirit is stinted to them, and that they are not absolutely so good Linguists as the Apostles were.

They have had those among them indeed, who have made a vain Ostentation of this gift also; but they have been Subtile Popish Priests in Masquerade, who in Mechanical Dresses, have endeavoured to make men believe, that they never had any learned Education, and yet that they did not want it, as having no less a Person than the Holy Ghost himself for their Tutor, who has taught them the Learned Tongues; but these have been detected for Impostors, by trying them in such Languages as they have not understood. And so for the gift of Healing, Curing the Deaf, Blind, Dumb, Lunatick and Paralytick, and Ejecting of Devils, they do not lay claim to them; and yet one thing, observe by the way, they assume to themselves, which is the Gift of Unpremeditated Prayer, and yet that is not mentioned amongst any of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, described at large in *1 Cor. 12.* nor in any other place of Holy Scripture beside.

It may be asked then here, What is the Quenching of the Spirit now adays? Doth not the Spirit of God work still on the Children of Obedience, as well as the Evil Spirit on the Children of Disobedience? *Eph. 2. 2.*

I An-



I Answer Yes, without doubt, so as to assist all those that use honest Endeavours, and proper Means, to fit themselves for the Ministerial Function. But how can we once think that God will work Miracles upon some, to save them the Pains of Study, and the Charges of Education, and forsake others, that by all possible care, have made it their Business, and been at great Expence both of Time, and upon other accounts, to qualifie themselves for the Embassadors of Christ Jesus, 2 Cor. 5. 20.

For my part (and I doubt not the concurrent Sentiments of all unprejudic'd and considerate Persons) I give no credit to any that arrogate to themselves a Supernatural Call to the Ministry. With great and profound Humility, we Sons of the Church of *England*, are ready to acknowledge, That the best Men of us all are unable to act any good thing, as of our selves alone, but our Sufficiency is of God. We owe all we can say or do well, to the Aid of God's good and gracious Spirit, Co-operating with our earnest though weak Endeavours. But how unlikely is it, and indeed absurd, to imagine, That God should deny us the Blessings of his Holy Spirit, who are always praying for its Sanctifying Influences, kind and benign Assistances, and by incessant Studies, striving to improve our Talents of Grace, Learning and Knowledge, for the Edification of our Brethren; and bestow it in a Super-eminent degree upon Persons who never had any extraordinary Parts, or common Ingenious Education, so as to enable them to do more without any precious Pains, than those who have always been diligent to supply themselves with necessary Sciences of all sorts, in order to the great Work of the Ministry?

Certainly our Heavenly Father hath always been more propitious to the sedulous Endeavours of his Pious Servant, joyning the help of his Spirit with ordinary means; such as Learning, Study, Meditation, comparing of Pas-

sages of Holy Scripture one with another, Consulting  
*Original Languages*, and the like. This undoubtedly is  
 the way to a true Gospel-Ministry, to have such for the  
 Guide of Souls, as have had good Education, have been  
 such Studious Preparers of themselves for their Sacred  
 Office, that as it would be presumption in them in the  
 highest degree, to expect Miracles in these Days, to make  
 them Learned *Rabbins extempore* of Illiterate Men, so (God  
 be praised) it is no wise necessary for them to plead any  
 such thing, as being qualify'd for the Work in the usual  
 Method, as the Nature of our Establish'd Church requires,  
*viz.* by being taught the Learned Tongues in their youth-  
 ful Days, Philosophical Institutions in their fresher Aca-  
 demick Gowns (which Philosophy is justly Stiled the  
*Hand-maid to Divinity*) and afterward in the Maturity of  
 their Judgments, have searched into the great Truths of  
 the *Christian Religion*, Perused the Councils, Fathers and  
 Primitive Writers, and the Defences and Apologies of our  
 Church, against all sorts of Opposers. Which by the  
 Grace of God will still be done, against *Atheists* and *The-*  
*ists*, which, I look upon to be as near in their  
 Notions, as they are in their Names, if not, many of  
 them (though dissembled) altogether the same: Against  
*Socinians*, who deny the Lord that bought them, and put  
 him to an open shame, who, as far as in them lies, make  
 Him suffer in his Divinity, as he did once in his Humanity:  
 Against *Jesuited Romanists*, and Bigotted Separatists  
 and Schismatics, of what Denomination whatsoever;  
 in the mean time shewing a Spirit of Moderation, and of  
 some having Compassion, making a difference, as St. Jude  
 speaks, *ver.* 22. endeavouring to win them, together with  
 the Strength of Arguments, by all the Sweetness of Tem-  
 per imaginable, Brotherly Love and Respect, Neighbourly  
 Visits, especially in any Affliction, extraordinary Emer-  
 gency

gency or Occasion ; but above all, by the Gravity of our Deportment, and the Lustre and Ornament of Sober and Religious Lives.

Where there is such a Ministry, as God be thanked ours is, And Honour is due ; Divines that have been Episcopally Ordain'd, according to the custom of the Church from the Apostles times, having been strictly examined as to their Abilities before admitted Graduates in the Universities ; afterward, before the Imposition of Hands for the Susception of Holy Orders, by the Holy Prelates of the Church themselves, or by persons of Learning and Integrity deputed by them, whom they can safely confide in for that weighty purpose.

These are the Levites that ( as the Scripture speaks ) the Laity are not to forsake as long as they live upon the earth, *Dent. 12. 19.* such are to be reverenc'd for their works sake, the Message which they came upon, being no less than the Reconciliation of Men to God ; the Salvation of their unvaluable and immortal Souls. Which is one great meaning of the *not quenching the Spirit* ; that as the Ministers of the Gospel should not by neglect of their Office, and illness of their lives (which God avert) drive off the Holy Spirit from assisting them in their Labour, but keep up Godliness and Religion, by devout Prayer and good Preaching, joyned with a sober exemplary Life and Conversation ; so where such persons and gifts are seen, none should be averse to them, as if they were false Prophets ; None should rob them of their Tithes and Dues, which is call'd *robbing of God*, *Malac. the 3d. and v. 8.* and such sacriligious Persons are said to be *curst with a Curse* in the verse following ; None should wrong them in their good Names, by execrable Lies and Villainous Slanders, or any way grieve or misuse them ; none should be *murderers* ( as I may so speak ) *haters of the Clergy*, which

which yet more than a good many are, but *φιλονεικῶν*, *lovers of the Clergy*, remembering that antient observation, *Qui vera fide colit Deum, amat etiam Sacerdotum*. He that loveth God in sincerity, loves his Ministers so too; and as the Apostle speaks, *let us be so accounted of, as Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the Mysteries of God.* 1 Cor. 4. 1. And that all we that are Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God, may be found faithful in our several Stations, which is required of us v. 2 of that Chapter. May the Good Spirit of God guide and direct us, that thus by the goodness of our Lives, and soundness of our Doctrine, we may save both our selves and them that hear us, 1 Tim. 4. 16.

4. Which introduces the *Fourth and last Particular*, *Despise not Prophecy*, i. e. Genuine Interpretations of the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, nor consequently those that make them, *such as labour in the Word and Doctrine*, as the Apostle's expression is to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5. 17.

The Holy Scripture is the Rule that we are all to walk by, and the Expounding of this, and the exciting our Brethren, from the Examples, Precepts, Promises, and Threats thereof, how to deport themselves, is our Ministerial Office and Duty. That the word *Prophecy* is *Interpreting Scripture* and preaching upon it, is evident from the 14 Chap. of the 1 Ep. to the Cor. v. 1. *Follow after Charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy*; and v. 3. 4. He that Prophecieth, speaketh unto men to Edification, and Exhortation and Comfort; he that speaketh in an unknown Tongue, edifieth himself, but he that prophecieth Edifieth the Church. This was our Saviour Christ's Prophetick Office, to make known the Will of God to the World, and so all that have in any good degree done the like, are stiled *Prophets*, all that have Taught men their Duty towards God and man. Thus  
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among the *Pagans*, the Divines who taught them what they ought to do, their Priests or Religious Persons, were termed *Vates*, Prophets. The word doth always imply such as are indu'd with a Spirit of foretelling *future Events*, but as *Grammarians*, informs us, naturally signifies no more than a *Procurator*, or *Prolocutor*, speaking from, or instead of another, or acting in his stead; as a *Pro-Consul* is he that supplies the *Consul's* Place, *vet* in Composition being the same with *vis*. Upon this account the *Jewish* High-Priest was a Prophet to his People, who entering into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the Holy of Holies, to inform himself of God's Will, was to reveal the same to the People. In the like Sense it is that God saith to *Moses*, concerning *Aaron*, *He shall be thy Spokesman to the People, and he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God*, *Exod. 4. 16.* That which is here render'd *Spokesman*, *Orator*, or *Prolocutor*, is *Chap. 7. 5.* Interpreted Prophet. See (saith God) *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy Prophet.* In the acceptance of speaking from Man to God, *Abraham* is call'd a Prophet, *Gen. 20. v. 7.* where God in a Dream speaketh to *Abimilech* in this manner: *Now therefore restore the man his wife, for he is a Prophet, and he shall pray for thee.* Whence may be infer'd, that the Appellation of Prophet may be ascribed, not improperly, to them who in *Christian Congregations* have a due Ministerial Call to put up publick Petitions for their People, and Administer all the Offices of Religious Worship. Now, though the Word of God it self, in this degenerate Age, is despised by many evil Men, under the Notion of Reveal'd Religion, which they are great Contemners of, yet since it is clear as the Sun, that it is unjustly and groundless (no Writings whatsoever having the like Authentick Truth, as the Learned Bishop *Stillingsfleet*, in his *Origines Sacrae*, makes



makes appear) So I take those Words to be Reflection sufficient upon them, and which ought to be a Terror to them, from the Examples of others, as being spoken on the like occasion, *Acts* 13. 41. *Behold the despisers, and wonder, and perish.* The Despisers of the Gospel are here particularly threatned, for disbelieving and rejecting our Saviour's Resurrection, and other Divine Works fore-told by the Prophets long before. And what if the *Romanists* vilifie this Word of God in comparison with their Traditions, their Foolish and Ridiculous Legends (as the *Pharisees* of old) is it ever the worse in it self? No, 'tis for this very reason that they do it, assign'd by St. *John*, chap. 3. 20. *Every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.* And as for those that call it a *Dead Letter*, doubt we not, upon the good evidence we have, but they receiv'd it from those Deluders, the first Projectors of this rude and ill manner'd antick and ridiculous Profession.

As to us Ministers of the Church of England, we desire upon all accounts to have the Scripture for our Test, *To the Law and to the Testimony*, as *Isaiah* speaks, *Isa.* 8. 20. *They who speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* If the Scripture be not on our side, let none bid us *God speed*, or wish us good luck in the Name of the Lord, 2 *John* 10. *Maledictus est*, saith St. *Anstin*, *qui quidpiam predicat, præterquam, quod in Scripturis legis & Evangelii recepimus.* Though an Angel from Heaven should preach otherwise, let him be accursed, *Gal.* 1. 8. But (as it hath been sufficiently prov'd against all our Adversaries) if we act consonantly to the Word of God, derive the Authority of our Commission and Doctrine from thence, and live accordingly, then are we not to be despised, but to be accounted worthy of a double Honour; then they that despise us, despise Christ that sent us, and our Heavenly Father that sent Him,



*Him, Luk. 10. 19. Despise not man but God, who hath given unto us his holy Spirit, 1 Thes. 4. 8.*

St. Paul tells us, 2 Tim. 3. *That the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus: And that all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* ἰ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀρ-  
 3<sup>ρον</sup>Θ, The Man of God, that is the Teacher or Preacher of the Gospel, sent, and authorised by God, may by the Study of the Scriptures be supply'd upon all Occasions to discharge his Duty towards Men's precious Souls, committed to his care.

The necessity of these publick Instructions from the Publick, may be deduc'd from Rom. 10. 14, 15. *How shall they call on him, on whom they have not believ'd? And how shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?*

That the Ministers of our Church are lawfully Commissioned, and sent to Preach the Gospel, I have shewed before, as not usurping the Office of the Ministry, but having receiv'd the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, πρεσβυτεριον, the Bishops, as the Word signifies; no Inferiour Novel Imposition.

Which Episcopal Order, that it hath been from the Apostles times, is manifest from the Apostles themselves: For St. Peter was Bishop of Antioch; Titus Arch-Bishop of Crete, and Timothy Bishop of Ephesus. And we need go no further for the proof of it, than those Words in this Chapter, Ver. 12. & 3. where you find my Text; *We beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you,*

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and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in Love for their works sake. The Greek Words, *ἐπισκοποι οὖν*, those are set, or rule over you, signifie the Bishops of the several Churches in those days, call'd in the first times *ἐπισκοποι*, as the Learned Dr. Hammond observes. As appears then, Preaching was one of the Bishop's principal Works of old, which since they cannot do so constantly in all places now adays, their Diocesses being so large, and their Avocations so frequent upon diverse accounts, our Church has found it necessary to have settled Parochial Ministers, who are to be Faithful and Wise Stewards under Christ and them, Rectors or Rulers over God's Household, the Church, to give them their Portion of Meat, Spiritual Sustenance for their Souls, in due Season.

To conclude then, Happy ye Sons of the Tribe of *Levi*, the Lot of God's own Inheritance, Priests of the Most High God; who like *Timothy*, from your Youth have Study'd the Word of God, and ever since made it your Employment and Delight together, to Consult these Lively Oracles: Here is the inexhaustible Fountain of Comfort, to which you Shepherds of Souls are to lead your Flocks; here are the Pastures whence you are to Feed those whom Christ hath Purchased with his own Blood; from this Magazine you are to Arm your selves and others, to war a good warfare; fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life: Hence you are to supply your selves with Materials, as the Apostle speaks in this Chapter, *v. 14.* where my Text is, *To warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, and be patient towards all men; i. e.* To preserve your Flocks from the Inroads of Wolves in Sheep's clothing, to spare no Pains to reduce the lost or straggling Sheep, from the Example of the good Shepherd in the Gospel, *That bore him on his shoulders rejoicing,*

*joicing*, Luke 15. 5. Hence, like *Boanerges*, the Sons of Thunder, whilst you proclaim the Terrors of the Lord against hardened and presumptuous Sinners, you are to Animate the timorous and weak of Faith, that they despair not, pouring Oil into their Wounds, and shewing them what a Gracious God, upon unfeigned Repentance, they have to deal with. And as the Apostle speaks to the *Galatians*, Gal. 6. 1. to restore such as are overtaken in a Fault. Brethren, says he, *if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, ἀδελφοί, Divines, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.* Blessed are they, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing; if He come in the *Second*, or come in the *Third Watch*, blessed are those Servants; assuredly, when Christ, the Chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

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